

SECTION III—REMARKS

This amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action mailed June 16, 2006, for the above-noted patent application. Claims 15-22 are canceled, and new claims 30-33 are added. Claims 1-14 and 23-33 remain pending in the application. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application and allowance of all pending claims in view of the following remarks.

Allowed Claims

The Examiner indicated that claims 1-14 and 23-29 are allowed. None of these claims is amended herein, so they continue to be allowed.

Claim Objections

The Examiner objected to claims 18-22, but indicated that these claims would be allowable if re-written in independent form to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

New claim 30 combines the subject matter previously found in claim 18 with the subject matter of its corresponding base claim 15. Applicants submit that new claim 30 is therefore allowable. New claim 31 depends from claim 30 and is therefore allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 30.

New claim 32 combines the subject matter previously found in claim 22 with the subject matter of its corresponding base claim 20. Applicants submit that new claim 32 is therefore allowable. New claim 33 depends from claim 32 and is therefore allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 32.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejected claims 15-17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious in view of, and therefore unpatentable over, various combinations of the following references: U.S. Patent No. 6,019,286 to Li *et al.* ("Li") and European Patent No. EP1128315 to Rigoni *et al.* ("Rigoni"). Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner's rejections are rendered moot by the cancellation of these claims.

Conclusion

Given the above amendments and accompanying remarks, all claims pending in the application are in condition for allowance. If the undersigned attorney has overlooked a teaching in any of the cited references that is relevant to allowance of the claims, the Examiner is requested to specifically point out where such teaching may be found. Further, if there are any informalities or questions that can be addressed via telephone, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney at (206) 292-8600.

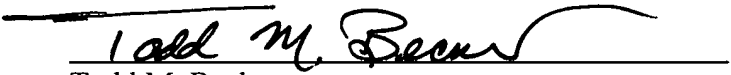
Charge Deposit Account

Please charge our Deposit Account No. 02-2666 for any additional fee(s) that may be due in this matter, and please credit the same deposit account for any overpayment.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: 8-18-06



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